

this measure once it became the only available option to provide much-needed help to American families. I, however, have deep concerns with other aspects of this bill, and I extend my support for it with strong reservations.

Our economy has not yet recovered from the downturn that began over 2 years ago. Hawaii's foreclosure rate in October of this year was the 12th highest in the Nation. In November, Hawaii saw a 49-percent increase in consumer bankruptcy filings compared to the same month in 2009, the second largest increase in the country. These are strong indications that people in Hawaii cannot sustain an increase in their tax obligations. We cannot allow taxes to rise on the workingclass when so many homeowners are already unable to afford their mortgages and consumers are unable to meet their outstanding debt obligations.

One major cause of these problems is unemployment, and I would not have been able to support this legislation had it not included a 13-month extension of unemployment benefits. Families and individuals across Hawaii and the Nation need these benefits to help pay their rents and mortgages while they search for a job, and parents need this assistance to put food on the table and provide for their children. I refuse to abandon these people. That is why I supported this bill.

I regret that we were unable to provide permanent tax relief for working-class Americans, families, and small businesses because their financial well-being has been haplessly tied to tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires since the beginning of this tax debate. Earlier this month, we considered two fair and reasonable tax proposals—one to permanently extend the expiring tax cuts for families earning under \$250,000, followed by a compromise that included Americans earning up to \$1 million a year. These were good-faith efforts to provide help where it is most needed—to families and small businesses that, unlike the millionaires and billionaires out there, do not have the financial security to weather the recession. Unfortunately, both were defeated by a minority of my colleagues and instead we have been forced to maintain fiscally irresponsible Bush-era tax policies through the legislation that we have just passed.

When these tax cuts were enacted at the beginning of this decade, I called it "irresponsible fiscal policy." I correctly predicted that the upper income tax breaks would lead to an explosion of the deficit and leave a mountain of debt for future generations. At the time, I lobbied for targeted tax cuts that would stimulate economic growth and employment while preserving fiscal discipline.

The national debt now stands above \$13.8 trillion. Our budget surpluses have long since turned into deficits. Difficult budget choices are now before us. We will have the opportunity to re-examine these tax cuts for the richest

Americans that we have just imprudently extended, as well as the temporary estate tax and payroll tax holiday provisions in the bill. Fiscal discipline must be maintained. I am prepared to make hard choices to restore and preserve our country's long-term economic security. Until then, I am pleased that we were able to help the unemployed and working-class through this extension of expiring tax provisions and unemployment benefits, and that is why I supported this bill.

#### REMEMBERING RICHARD HOLBROOKE

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, it is with deep sadness that I speak in memory of a dear friend, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who died Monday at the far-too-early age of 69.

I first met Dick years and years ago, long before he held his most recent post of Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. We had so many conversations, meetings, and trips over the years, as his career progressed, particularly during the war in the former Yugoslavia.

Dick's skillful diplomacy that ended the siege of Sarajevo and finally ended that war is legendary. Nobody else could have done what he did. He was motivated above all by compassion, intent on stopping the suffering of innocent people who were being terrorized for no other reason than their ethnicity.

He combined the force of his convictions with the force of his personality, along with his boundless energy, to do what others had been unable to do. Ambassador Holbrooke did not accept no for an answer.

I remember meeting Dick in 1999. We had planned a meeting. I was in Macedonia, and he was in Kosovo. It was a very foggy, rainy day. We could not travel by helicopter, as we planned, so we met on a slippery, narrow road, with a several-hundred-foot cliff on one side. We sat together on the hood of a car and he described what he had observed. He told me what he believed needed to be done. It was fascinating because Dick put everything into perspective as only he could.

It is fair to say we took advantage of that unlikely meeting to reminisce and laugh about other times and places, some of which were just as unlikely. This was one of those rare conversations that makes an unforgettable impression on you—most of all because it was Dick Holbrooke. He was so passionate, so animated, yet with a determination and a sense of humor that made the challenge of solving the thorniest of problems hard to resist.

It was in his latest position that I heard most often from Dick, when he would call to keep me apprised of his efforts to try to get the most out of our aid to Afghanistan and Pakistan. It was not an easy task. He called me on weekends at my home in Vermont, and we would talk about it.

Dick led the reshaping of U.S. policy in South Asia during a difficult transition period. He charged headfirst into the maelstrom of Afghanistan and Pakistan 7 years after the conflict began, raising key and sometimes unpopular questions about our efforts there. Not infrequently, the press would report about his combative style and another heated exchange with some foreign leader. But in Dick's final hours, his wife Kati Marton received calls of sympathy from Afghan President Karzai and Pakistani President Zardari, which says a lot about Dick.

My thoughts and prayers are with Kati and Dick's sons and stepchildren and with Dick's loyal staff at the Department of State during this sad time. I and others here have lost a dear friend. The American people have lost one of the greatest diplomats of our time, an extraordinary man who loved this country and devoted his life to it as much as any person could.

I yield the floor.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for approximately 20 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that our whip, Senator DURBIN, be given permission to speak after I finish.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### REMEMBERING RICHARD HOLBROOKE

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I wish to echo the comments of Senator LEAHY on Ambassador Holbrooke. My sense was, Ambassador Holbrooke was a remarkable diplomat and public servant. I got to see him both when he was in his public position and a private position. He was always dedicated to peace in the world. I remember reading his book, "To End a War," which was about the Balkans, and sharing it with my father and my father having discussions with him on the phone. He said: This diplomat, Richard Holbrooke, is a remarkable guy.

If you read that book, it is a classic about bringing peace to a very difficult situation. I express my heartfelt condolences to his wife Kati Marton and his two children, David and Anthony Holbrooke. I tell the family we will miss him very much on the international scene.

## WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam President, I rise to discuss the Presidential review that is taking place on the war in Afghanistan.

We are approaching another signpost in the conflict that has kept our military men and women in harm's way longer than any other in our history—109 months and counting. That is longer than the wars in Vietnam or Iraq. It is even longer than the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

The signpost I wish to speak of is one President Obama posted when he ordered the troop increase in Afghanistan last December.

In his orders, he also called for a review of our war strategy to be conducted 1 year later. That review was to include:

The security situation and other conditions, including improvement in Afghan governance, development of Afghan National Security Forces, Pakistani actions and international support.

That review is due this month.

I commend our President for his foresight in calling for this review. But in recent months, I have read troubling statements from administration and military leaders. These statements lead me to believe this review is seen as nothing more than a check in the box.

In a Washington Post article, an Under Secretary of Defense said as much when he stated that the review will not go into much more detail than what is already provided to the President during his monthly status updates.

General Petraeus was also quoted in the same article as saying: "I would not want to overplay the significance of this review."

I think this approach to this review would be another tragic mistake in what I fear is an ongoing series of them.

After 9 years and \$455 billion, the unfortunate reality is, we are still not anywhere near where we want to be or should be in Afghanistan. Anything less than a thorough and unflinching review is unacceptable. It is unacceptable to me, and it is unacceptable to the American people.

A famed military author, Carl von Clausewitz, wrote a book titled "On War," which is required reading for any military professional. In that book, he wrote:

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.

Today, our struggles in Afghanistan necessitate that we again follow von Clausewitz's advice. We must answer the big questions about the kind of war we set out to fight and the kind of war we are fighting.

Everyone knows the big question when it comes to Afghanistan. That is

why it is the big question: Is our prolonged involvement in Afghanistan worth the costs we as a nation are paying for it? Is it worth the human cost? Thousands of Americans have been maimed or killed in this war so far, and thousands more stand in harm's way as we speak. Is it worth the fiscal cost? Our wars in the last decade have left us with huge deficits. And for the last decade, wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq went unpaid for. Instead of rallying the Nation during a time of war, asking for sacrifices from everyone, Congress and two Presidents chose to pass this massive debt on to future generations—the first time we have done so in modern times.

The real issue is not what we are spending to protect our Nation but whether that spending is making us safer, which leads to the question: Is our continued involvement in Afghanistan worth the cost to our larger national security priorities? Our commitment in Afghanistan is pulling time, energy, and funds from other equally important national security priorities, priorities such as energy independence, counterproliferation, and countering terrorist activities in Yemen, Somalia, and many other places around the world.

That is why this review is so critical. We have to decide as a Nation if our prolonged involvement in Afghanistan is worth it, and we must decide on an exit strategy. We have a responsibility to answer that big question with a thoroughness and honesty that honors the sacrifices of our military men and women.

I believe we answer that question by using this signpost—by using this review—to address four key issues that will ultimately mean the difference between our success and our failure in Afghanistan. To me, those four issues are: our timeline for an exit strategy, an accelerated transition to an Afghan-led security operation, corruption in the Karzai government, and safe havens in Pakistan.

Let me take them one at a time. First, our timeline for an exit strategy. This review should provide an honest assessment of where we are in the timeline that President Obama laid out last year. In his speech at West Point last December, President Obama rightly dropped the open-ended guarantee of U.S. and NATO involvement. Here is what he said:

The absence of a time frame for transition would deny us any sense of urgency in working with the Afghan government. It must be clear that Afghans will have to take responsibility for their security and that America has no interest in fighting an endless war in Afghanistan.

His order last year for the military mission was clear and included a timeline based on a "accelerated transition." In that order—quoting from the order—he focused on:

Increasing the size of the ANSF and leveraging the potential for local security forces so we can transition respon-

sibly for security to the Afghan government on a time line that will permit us to begin to decrease our troop presence by July 2011.

July 2011. That is a little more than 6 months from now. The American people deserve to know if July 2011 is still a realistic timeframe to begin our exit from Afghanistan; and, if not, what has happened to cause a delay and how long will that delay be? What will be the additional costs, both human and budgetary?

The bottom line is this: Without an aggressive timeline for reducing U.S. military support in the region—a timeline that the Afghans believe is rock solid—there is no incentive for them to defend their villages and cities. With the U.S. and NATO as guarantors of security, the people of Afghanistan could rely on our forces to provide security indefinitely.

Chairman LEVIN, our Armed Services chairman here in the Senate, has given careful thought to the issue of a timeline. In a recent speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, he said:

Open-ended commitments encourage drift and permit inaction. Firm time lines demand attention and force action.

Without an aggressive timeline, there is no exit strategy.

Issue No. 2, and directly related to No. 1, the accelerated transition to the Afghan people. This must be an Afghan-led security effort. This month's report should update the American people on our progress or lack thereof in turning over security duties to the Afghan National Army, the Afghan National Security Forces, and the Afghan National Police.

The famed British officer T. E. Lawrence, known to many as Lawrence of Arabia, once said, with regard to the Arab insurgency against the Ottoman Empire:

Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than they do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are there to help them.

This quote is also mentioned in the Army Field Manual on counterinsurgency. In Afghanistan, I believe the same approach can be applied.

The Afghan security forces are not doing their job perfectly, nor should we expect the Afghan forces to match the might of the U.S. military. But to echo T. E. Lawrence, they are beginning to do it tolerably, and I believe it is better that the Afghans continue to build on their new success.

Combined, an aggressive timeline and an accelerated transition to the Afghans will help us achieve two equally important goals: first, the timely handover of security helps prove to the international community that the American people do not have imperial ambitions in Afghanistan. As President Obama said at West Point:

We have no interest in occupying your country.

And second, a timely handover allows the United States and its allies to bring our heroes home, and it allows us